

Subject: Hurricane Follow-Up

Dear Colleagues:

The impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita has been devastating to families in the Gulf Coast States. Throughout our Nation communities have reached out to welcome families and children from the Gulf into their homes, communities and schools. State directors of special education and the staffs of the OSEP-supported parent centers are working hard to ensure that all children with disabilities receive appropriate services in a timely manner.

The Department is fully committed to supporting your efforts to work with schools and families to access appropriate services. I am providing the following information to you to share with families and schools regarding accessing materials for students with print disabilities who may need access to instructional materials in formats other than standard print.

Schools needing print materials in accessible format may order them from the **American Printing House for the Blind**. The web site for the "Accessible Textbook Initiative and Collaborative Project," in which large print and Braille textbooks can be ordered for the classrooms, is:
<http://www.aph.org/custom/index.html>

Textbooks can be produced in three (3) different formats. The first format is Braille, in hardcopy, in electronic files for embossing and/or in downloadable files from the Web site. The second format is large type books in standard textbook size and color, in hardcopy, in electronic files for customizing point size and font, and/or in downloadable files from the web site. The third format is audio, using either synthetic speech of digital files or the human voice.

Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic (RFB&D) is the nation's educational library for students of all ages who cannot read standard print effectively because of a disability such as visual impairment, learning disability or another physical disability.

RFB&D has set up a special mailbox for those individuals or institutions who have relocated or who may require replacement materials due to the hurricanes. Individuals or institutional RFB&D members who have questions or needs regarding RFB&D services, can e-mail katrinahelp@rfd.org <<mailto:katrinahelp@rfd.org>>. They should include their full name, school name (if an institution), member ID# (if known) and a way of contacting them, whether temporary or permanent. An RFB&D Member Services representative will get back to them as soon as possible. If they do not have access to email, they can call Member Services at 1-800-221-4792 and let them know they have a need for replacement of books and equipment due to the hurricanes. RFB&D is also prepared to waive membership renewal fees due to hardship. If schools are not already an existing institutional member and need help providing displaced students with accessible educational materials, they can use the same email address or Member Services number as above to contact RFB&D. RFB&D has set up an internal process to expedite response to their needs and will work with them to provide books and equipment to their students.

We appreciate the work all of you are doing to support families and children disrupted by the hurricanes and will work with you in the days ahead as you strive to ensure that all young children and students with disabilities receive the services they need.

Sincerely,

Troy R. Justesen
Acting Director
Office of Special Education Programs